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## The Overseers of the Poor in Accomac, Pittsylvania, and Rockingham Counties, 1787-1802

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THE OVERSEERS OF THE POOR  
IN  
ACCOMAG, PITTSYLVANIA, AND ROCKINGHAM COUNTIES  
1787 - 1802

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of History  
The College of William and Mary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Robert M. Uary

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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May 1960

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## PREFACE

A new Virginia institution, the overseers of the poor, was created by the General Assembly in May, 1780. The law applied to seven western counties and was revolutionary in that it transferred the care of the poor from an ecclesiastical body, the vestry of the Established Church, to a publicly elected secular one, the overseers of the poor. The performance of this new civil body from 1787 through 1802, the critical period of transition, is the subject of this study.

The analysis of the social implications of the transfer of responsibility for the care of the poor from a religious body to a civil body is based upon the minute books of the overseers of the poor in the three counties of Accomac, Pittsylvania, and Rockingham. These three counties were selected because their records are complete and because the counties are representative of the three geographical sections of the state: tidewater, Piedmont, and transmontane. Each section was in a different stage of social and economic development in 1786 when the law of 1780 relating to the Overseers of the Poor was applied to the entire state. Each section was subject to and influenced by the way of life that existed in that particular section.

The vestrybooks of St. George's Parish, Accomac County, and Camden Parish, Pittsylvania County, were used for the study of the care of the poor under the supervision of the church and its vestry. There is no vestry book for Rockingham Parish.

Extensive, but not exhaustive, use was made of the court minute books, court judgments and orders, and the wills and deeds books of the

three counties.

I am indebted to many people for encouragement, assistance and constructive suggestions in the preparation of this thesis. However, I am especially indebted to Dr. W. W. Abbot whose patience, interest, guidance, and suggestions in directing my work have been invaluable; to Dr. R. L. Morton who awakened my interest in the subject; to Dr. L. H. Johnson and Dr. L. W. Towner who encouraged me to undertake graduate study; To Mr. J. A. Servies and Mr. H. L. Ganter of the William and Mary Library, and Dr. W. J. Van Schreeven and the staff of the Archives Division of the Virginia State Library for assistance and cooperation in locating source material; to the Research Division of Colonial Williamsburg Inc. for the generous use of a micro-viewer; and to my classmates for their constructive criticism of the preliminary drafts of the thesis.

I, alone, am responsible for all the interpretations and conclusions appearing in the thesis, and for any errors that may come to light.

ROBERT M. USRY.

May 2, 1960.

## CHAPTER I

### TRANSITION FROM VESTRY TO OVERSEERS OF THE POOR

The General Assembly of Virginia at its May 1780 meeting enacted a law with the following preamble:

Whereas great inconveniences have arisen from the mode prescribed for making provision for the poor and other duties of the vestries, as by law now directed in the counties of Rockbridge, Botetourt, Montgomery, Washington, Greenbrier, Augusta, and Frederick, Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That where any of the above enumerated counties have vestries, or other bodies vested with powers to provide for the poor, the same are hereby dissolved. And for providing for the poor, and such other parochial duties as have heretofore been exercised by the vestries, churchwardens, or other bodies of the respective parishes, Be it enacted, That the sheriffs of the said counties shall, at their respective courts to be held in the month of October next .. proceed to elect five freeholders, residents in their said counties, to serve for three years, and be known by the name of Overseers of the Poor; in which election the said sheriffs shall observe the same rules, regulations, and rights of suffrage as were formerly used in the election of vestrymen; saving and reserving to the church now, and at all times hereafter, every right, title, or claim appertained thereto, as formerly reserved by an act entitled "An act for exempting the different societies of dissenters from contributing to the support and maintenance of the church of England, as by law established, and its ministers, and for other purposes therein mentioned." <sup>1</sup>

The act further declared the overseers of the poor "to be a body politic and corporate, and succeed to the powers and duties of vestries and churchwardens". The October court in the respective counties was to set a date for the eligible voters to elect five freeholders, resident of the county, to serve for three years as overseers of the poor; and vacancies that occurred between elections were to be filled by court appointment. Orders of the court were to be directed to the overseers of the poor in the same manner as they were formerly directed to the vestry. The vestry was instructed to settle all of their accounts, all

money and tobacco by them levied and disbursed, with the overseers of the poor.<sup>2</sup>

The law is very significant, although it applied to only seven young and sparsely settled western counties. It was the first legislation creating a new institution in Virginia, the overseers of the poor. The act was revolutionary in that it transferred the care of the poor from an ecclesiastical body, the vestry of the Established Church, to a secular one. The law was the foundation upon which all future enactments relative to the care of the poor was based. Furthermore, it was another step towards the separation of church and state, something for which dissenting religious groups had been working for several years.

Religious dissent had been present in the state since the early days of the colony and had survived, despite the laws requiring conformity to the Church of England. The first break in the requirement of conformity came in 1689 with the passage of the Toleration Act during the reign of William and Mary. The act, as interpreted in Virginia, permitted dissenting ministers of a recognized faith, licensed by the Governor and council, to hold meetings in stated places. One of the first licenses was issued in 1699 to Frances Mackemie, a Presbyterian Minister, permitting him to preach in two of his houses in Accomac County;<sup>3</sup> but dissenters did not become a potent force in Virginia until the middle of the eighteenth century, although small groups continued to secure licenses during the early decades of the century. The Presbyterians were first to become strong enough to be an influential factor in the struggle for the separation of church and state--when that movement began in the 1770s--and then only after two of the Presbyterian movements divergent but chronologically



parallel, met and merged.

As early as the 1720's immigrants from Pennsylvania were moving into the northern part of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.<sup>4</sup> Germans and Scotch-Irish, who for economic and religious reasons had been attracted to Pennsylvania because of that colony's policy of toleration,<sup>5</sup> finding cheap land scarce in Pennsylvania, began moving into the Shenandoah Valley and by 1740 had established licensed Presbyterian meeting houses in the northern part of the Valley. There they were joined by settlers from eastern Virginia moving up the Rappahannock River Valley, the gateway to the west, to occupy territory opened for settlement by the huge Beverley Manor Grant of 1736.<sup>6</sup> The grant had been made to tidewater Virginia land speculators by the Virginia governor, William Gooch, to encourage Virginians to settle beyond the mountains. The Virginia settlers who took advantage of this opportunity were predominantly poor farmers and laborers. They had no strong religious ties and readily joined the Presbyterian churches being established by the settlers from Pennsylvania.

Almost simultaneously a dissenting group was developing in Hanover County. There the people, dissatisfied with formal ritualistic religion and led by Samuel Morris, started meeting in private homes to read sermons. When the authorities required them to secure a license, they declared themselves Presbyterians.<sup>7</sup>

The two Presbyterian movements merged after 1743 when William Robinson was sent as a missionary to Shenandoah Valley by the Presbytery of New Castle in New Jersey. He crossed over the mountains and met the group in Hanover County. Robinson was succeeded by the able Samuel Davies,<sup>8</sup> under whose leadership the denomination became strong enough to open

Hampden-Sydney College by 1776, the second college in Virginia.<sup>9</sup>

During the years that the Presbyterians were consolidating their position in the state, another dissenting group, the Separate Baptists, was rising to a position of influence. The Separate Baptists established their first church in Virginia in 1756 within the boundaries of present Pittsylvania County.<sup>10</sup> This church was an outgrowth of Shubal Stearn's Sandy Creek Church in North Carolina.<sup>11</sup> The Separate Baptists, a militant evangelistic group, refused to secure a license to preach and refused to hold their meetings at a stated place as required by law. Compliance with the law violated one of the five cardinal tenets of their faith--separation of church and state. Their failure to abide by the law led to the arrest and imprisonment of many of their ministers.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to growing dissent in Virginia, a reform movement within the Established Church was under way. Devereaux Jarrett, Dinwiddie County native and Anglican Minister, was the leader of this move for internal reform. Before entering the ministry, he became imbued with the New Light doctrine of personal salvation and attacked the loose living of the ministers and ritualistic services of the church. Jarrett and his followers did not formally separate from the Established Church until 1784, when the Methodist Episcopal Church was founded.<sup>13</sup>

The rapid growth of the dissenting bodies in Virginia was aided by the Great Awakening or revivalistic movement which swept through the colonies in the middle of the eighteenth century. The doctrine of personal regeneration was in the ascendancy, and the revivalistic ministers preached a salvation and talked a language that the ordinary man and his family could understand. Such preaching was in direct contrast to the rituals, creeds, and dogmas of the Established Church.

The Established Church which was failing more and more to meet the religious needs of the common people was run by the vestry, whose membership was composed of the social and political leaders of the parish, and had become self-perpetuating. Since shortly after the settlement of Jamestown the vestry had been given more and more duties and responsibilities which gave it more and more power and influence. It made up the parish budget, and levied and apportioned the taxes for parish expenses; employed ministers, clerks, lay readers, and sextons; selected the site for, built, and repaired churches and chapels; purchased and maintained the glebe for the minister; took care of the orphan and illegitimate children, including the rudimentary education of pauper children; kept records of births, deaths, and marriages; presented offenders and collected fines against morality and church discipline; appointed persons to establish and maintain boundary lines of owners of land, known as processioning, and kept a record of their reports; and exercised other powers necessary for the management of parochial affairs.

The many duties and responsibilities of the vestry required a regular and substantial income, produced by the annual laying of the Parish levy. The total of all accounts, including a contingent fund for emergency use, was figured once a year and prorated equally among all the tithables in the parish. The amount each paid was the same regardless of wealth, position, or church affiliation. Only the governor and ordained ministers were exempt from the levy, which was laid in pounds of tobacco.

The major portion of the work of the vestry fell upon the two members who were annually elected as churchwardens. The position demanded a great deal of time, effort, and patience and evidently was not eagerly

sought. Every vestry book shows that the churchwardens were usually the newest members of the vestry or older members that had not served recently. Seldom was a man elected to succeed himself.

As the colony became more thickly settled, the care of the poor became a greater problem. In 1755 the House of Burgesses gave the vestries permission to lease or buy land upon which to erect a work or poor house. Tools for work were to be provided, and poor children were to be educated until they were old enough to be bound out. The vestry was required to make rules regarding work for those sent to the poor house.<sup>14</sup>

By the middle of the eighteenth century the vestry, at the zenith of its power, was perhaps the most influential body in the secular, as well as the ecclesiastical, life of the parish. Not only was it self-perpetuating, but it could be dissolved only by an act of the House of Burgesses. However, by 1775, the rapid rise of the dissenting groups, the Presbyterians in the 1750s, the Baptists in the 1760s, and the demands for internal reforms in church by such ministers as Devereaux Jarrett, began to threaten the position of the Established Church and the vestry. Any possibility of the church maintaining its strong position was destroyed by the climactic political developments in the state in 1776, events which were the culmination of the tension that had been mounting between the colonies and England since 1763.

On June 20, 1776, the fifth and last of the Virginia Conventions which conducted the government of the state during the transition from colony to commonwealth, adopted the state's first constitution. It included the principle of religious freedom, a result of the adoption on May 15, 1776, of George Mason's Declaration of Rights. Article sixteen of the

document stated

That Religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence, and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity, towards each other.<sup>15</sup>

When the first session of the General Assembly, the new legislative body created by the constitution, met in October 1776, it received petitions from dissenting groups in the state requesting the disestablishment of the Anglican Church. The petitioners believed separation of church and state was the best guarantee of religious freedom. With Thomas Jefferson leading the fight for disestablishment, the Assembly adopted eight resolutions.<sup>16</sup> Three of these had profound effect upon the position and stability of the Established Church. First, all dissenters were exempt from taxes for the support of the church, which virtually destroyed the financial security of the church and opened the way for the perfunctory church members to escape taxation for its support by declaring themselves dissenters. Second, the vestries were to continue to levy taxes for poor relief. This made it necessary for the vestry to prepare two budgets and to determine two levy rates, one for the care of the poor and applicable to dissenters, the other both for the support of the church and for the care of the poor and applicable to members of the Established Church. Third, a fixed salary for the minister was suspended for one year, a severe blow to the morale of the ministers. By 1780 the position of the Established Church was deplorable. Ministers were leaving their charges, and glebe lands were being advertised for rent. The vestries were neglecting their duties, a major one of which was the care of the poor.

In the western counties of the state, those in the Shenandoah Valley and beyond, the counties which had been settled predominantly by dissenters and in which the Established Church had never been strong, the problem of the care of the poor became critical by 1780. In Rockbridge County in particular the situation became acute. In May of that year the county justices of the peace petitioned the General Assembly to establish some agency to administer poor relief. The petition was declared reasonable and in May 1780 the law creating a new institution in Virginia, the overseers of the poor, was enacted.

In May 1782, the overseers of the poor law was extended to include four more western counties, Shenandoah, Henry, Monongalia, and Ohio.<sup>17</sup> By October 1785, the care of the poor had become a serious problem throughout the state. The Established Church and its vestry had virtually collapsed everywhere. In April 1785, a convention had been held in Richmond, and the Protestant Episcopal Church was organized out of the ruins of the old Established Church. Having always been dependent upon state support, the church was now unable to carry on its many secular responsibilities. It became necessary for the state to take action.

The session of the General Assembly which met in October 1785 proved to be a memorable one. In 1784 a new general assessment bill—tax support for all religious groups—had been introduced into the legislature. James Madison, who led the fight against it, succeeded in having action postponed until November 1785. Attached to the bill for postponing action was a resolution ordering that the proposed measure be published and that the people signify their opinion respecting it. The opponents of the bill prevailed upon Madison to write an article against it. Thus, he

came to publish Memorial and Remonstrance, a classic and elaborate exposition of the relation of religion and the state, which received wide circulation in the state. Reaction against the bill was overwhelming. Assured of the sentiment of the people, Madison introduced into the House of Delegates on December 14, 1785, a revised version of Jefferson's 1779 bill for religious freedom. After much debate it became law on January 16, 1786.<sup>18</sup> The separation of church and state was now complete. The care of the poor now became an entirely secular problem as provided for in an act introduced into the House of Delegates in November 1785 and passed on January 19, 1786.<sup>19</sup> The overseers of the poor were made responsible for the care of the poor throughout the state.

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<sup>1</sup>Walter W. Hening, The Statutes at Large, Being A Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619. (Richmond, 1823), XI, 288-289.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ralph T. Whitclaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore (Richmond, 1951), II, 1285.

<sup>4</sup>Samuel E. Morison and Henry S. Commager, The Growth of the American Republic (New York, 1950), I, 95.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph A. Waddell, Annals of Augusta County (Staunton, Va., 1902), p. 29.

<sup>7</sup>William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia Historical and Biographical (Philadelphia, 1850), pp. 121-124.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-129.

<sup>9</sup>A. J. Morrison, College of Hampden-Sidney Dictionary of Biography (Hampden-Sidney, Va., 1921), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond, 1894), p. 17.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>12</sup>Lewis P. Little, Imprisoned Preachers of Religious Liberty in Virginia (Lynchburg, 1938), p. 521.

<sup>13</sup>Abel Stevens, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. (New York, 1866), p. 183.

<sup>14</sup>Hening, Statutes, V, 475-478. The law ordered that inmates of poor houses be required to wear on the right sleeve, a badge or mark with the name of the parish to which they belong. The vestry of St. George's Parish in Accomac County ordered this to be enforced at their meeting on February 13, 1767.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., IX, 111-112.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 164-167.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., XI, 62-63.

<sup>18</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, 1828), p. 144.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 148.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OVERSEERS OF THE POOR, 1787-1802

The January 19, 1786, Act of the General Assembly establishing the overseers of the poor as a statewide institution was based upon the law of 1780. It contained four main sections. The counties were to be laid off in districts and a superintendent of election was to be appointed in each by the county court. Elections were to be held triennially, at which the freeholders and housekeepers were to choose three men in each district to serve as overseers of the poor. The overseers were required to meet annually, between May 1 and August 1, to levy upon the tithables (the list to be furnished by the county clerk) "competent" sums of money or tobacco, at a stated price, for the support of the poor, lame, impotent, blind, and other inhabitants of the county unable to maintain themselves.

The overseers of the poor were required to report to the court any poor orphans, and upon authorization of the court to bind them out to some person or persons and file the indenture with the county clerk. Before August 10 of each year, the overseers were to make up a book of accounts showing the name of the person for whom money was appropriated and the purpose for which it was paid. The book had to be presented to the court annually, and a copy of the orders given to the collector of the taxes, who was to be chosen by the overseers of the poor. The collector was to be paid the same commission and to be subject to the same laws as the collector of county taxes. The collector was to pay to the persons, or to their order, the money levied for their support by October 1.

The power of the churchwardens relative to bastards was transferred to the overseers of the poor, who were to settle all accounts with the former churchwardens and to receive any money which had previously been

levied in the parish for the care of the poor. If any churchwarden refused to make a settlement the court could render judgement against him, plus costs. Vagrants were to be put to work by the overseers of the poor, and the overseers were given the same powers and required to perform the same duties as the former vestrymen with regard to processioning lands and maintaining roads and bridges.<sup>1</sup>

As the board of the overseers of the poor was a new institution, from time to time it was necessary to revise and to implement the laws relative to the body. The October 1786 General Assembly ordered the law put into effect in those counties that had not already done so, and that elections be held to fill all vacancies on each board. Those elected were to serve until the next triennial elections. The levies were to be laid as required under the law of January 1786, and a contingent fund, called a depositum, was to be included to provide for emergency relief cases. The lists of those receiving help in each district were to be open to the public and the county clerk was required to "unite" the lists from all of the districts. Any person denied the benefits and who thought he was entitled to them could appeal to the county courts. In addition to providing for the poor, lame, blind, and those unable to maintain themselves, the overseers of the poor were authorized to provide houses, nurses, and doctors for those needing them. Indigent non-residents of a district were to be returned to their home district. The overseers were required to make monthly reports of the orphans in their district. The court could bind out boys until they were twenty-one and girls until they were eighteen. The person to whom the orphan was bound was required to teach him a trade and to give him the rudiments of an education. Upon termination of the indenture the orphan was entitled to a payment of £3.10.0. Former churchwardens

refusing to settle their accounts could be sued in court.<sup>2</sup>

On December 31, 1787, the General Assembly passed an act completely revising all laws pertaining to the overseers of the poor and adding new regulations. Henceforth there were to be no more than four districts in each county, and those having more at the present time were to reduce them to four. The overseers were to meet annually, in joint session, on the first Monday in September, and to bring a list of the number, names, and situation of the poor in their district. At this meeting, if at least one member from each district was present, a president was to be chosen, regulations made for the succeeding year, all accounts adjusted and settled for the preceding one, and the levy made for the year.

A collector was to be appointed and required to give bond equivalent to twice the amount of the levy. He was to receive and pay out all money as ordered by the overseers, and to make a complete settlement at the annual meeting, presenting vouchers for each expenditure. The collector was to receive the same commission as the sheriff, usually six per cent, and to be reimbursed in case of non-payment by any chargeable. He could appoint deputy collectors but remained liable for their collections.

All accounts of the former overseers were to be settled at the annual meeting, the proceedings of which were to be recorded in a book by the clerk of the board, who was to be elected by the overseers. He was to be paid an annual salary not to exceed five pounds, and subject to a fine of twelve shillings for each absence, unless detained by accident or illness.

Anyone elected as an overseer of the poor and refusing to serve,

except for reasons of old age or infirmity, to be determined by the court, was subject to a fine of ten pounds. However, no person could be required to serve more than one three year term or one term in nine years. The members of the board were allowed six shillings per day for attendance and were subject to a fine of the same amount for non-attendance.

Vagrants could be brought before the justice of the peace, and, upon receiving a warrant, the overseers of the poor could put them to work for a period of time, not in excess of three months. The law declared a vagrant to be:

Any able bodied man, who not having the wherewithal to maintain himself - shall be found loitering, and shall leave a wife or children without means for their subsistence, whereby they may become burdensome to their county or town, and any able bodied man without a wife or children, who, not having the wherewithal to maintain himself, shall wander abroad, or be found loitering without breaking himself to some honest employment, or shall go about begging, or shall not pay his legal taxes, shall be deemed and treated as a vagrant.

Keepers of or exhibitors of "gaming-tables commonly called A.B.C. or E.O. tables, or of a Pharoah bank, or any other gaming-table of the same or like kind" shall be treated as vagrants. All forfeitures and penalties are to be paid one-half to the use of overseers of the poor and one-half to the informer.<sup>3</sup>

The laws relative to the overseers of the poor were further strengthened by the Assembly on December 25, 1788. The overseers were given power to sue the administrators of the estate of deceased churchwardens who had failed to settle their account. A person appointed to supervise an election for overseers of the poor and failing to do so could be fined ten pounds. The sheriff was to be the collector of the poor levies in the county, and the sergeant in incorporated towns. Failure of the sheriff to perform this duty subjected him to a fine of fifty pounds.<sup>4</sup>

On December 15, 1791, the Assembly authorized the court to appoint overseers when no electors turned out to vote. The same act permitted the annual meeting to be held on any day in September, and gave the sheriff until May 1 to account for his collections. In case of the death of an overseer, the remaining members were permitted to elect his successor. Poor rates were to be levied in specie only; and the fines and forfeitures collected by the sheriff for offenses against morality were to be used to lower the levy.<sup>5</sup>

An act passed on December 19, 1792, allowed four cents a mile, counting both ways, for removing "any person suspect to become chargeable to the county".<sup>6</sup> The act was the final legislation pertaining to the overseers of the poor before 1803.

The January 1786 Act of the General Assembly establishing the overseers of the poor on a statewide basis, transferred all civil responsibilities formerly exercised by the vestry to the overseers. The newly created civil body was responsible for the following functions: processioning the land; caring for widows, orphans, illegitimate children, the blind, the handicapped, and the indigent sick; making up the budget and levying the poor rates necessary for the operation of the overseers of the poor. The laws relative to these duties represented an accumulation of legislative enactments dealing with the vestry and dating back nearly a century and a half.

The processioning procedure had been formulated in a series of laws extending from 1662 through 1691 made necessary by the many disputes that arose regarding property lines. Frequently a property owner would employ a surveyor, and "the surveighors being for the most part carles of

seeing the trees marked, or the owner's never renewing them" or a deflection of the compass needle would alter property lines resulting in controversies and court suits. The original processioning law of 1662 stated that all the inhabitants of every "neck and tract of land adjoining shall go in procession" and see that the marks on the trees of every man's land are renewed. The processioning was to be done every four years, and when the bounds were once settled by mutual consent of the "present owners" the property lines became forever fixed.<sup>7</sup>

The county courts were required to order the vestry in each parish to divide it into districts and to appoint two or more processioners, resident of the district, to walk the bounds of all the property in it. The processioning was to be done in the presence of the property owners, and the returns were to be entered upon the vestry book of the parish, or in a separate book kept for that purpose. The failure of the court to order processioning subjected it to a fine of 10,000 pounds of tobacco. A vestry that failed to appoint processioners could be fined 1200 pounds of tobacco, and processioners who did not execute their responsibility might be fined 350 pounds of tobacco. The processioning and the making of a final report to the court was to be done every fourth year between the last day of September and the end of the following March.<sup>8</sup>

The Virginia processioning laws were faithfully executed by the vestrymen in at least two of the three counties with which this study is concerned. There is no extant vestry book for Rockingham Parish in the county of the same name, and the "Court Orders and Judgments Books" do not show that processioning was ordered in the county prior to the establishment of the overseers of the poor. The vestry of Camden Parish, Pittsylvania County,

appointed processioners at their meetings of November --, 1768, November 28, 1771, February 23, 1776, and March 22, 1781.<sup>9</sup> In St. George's Parish, Accomac County, processioners were appointed on August 2, 1767, July 30, 1771, October 16, 1775, September 15, 1779 and October 20, 1783.<sup>10</sup> There are no records of processioning returns in either of these vestry books; evidently they were kept in a separate book.

A second and major duty which the overseers of the poor inherited from the vestry was the care of the poor. The relevant laws appertaining to the vestry have been reviewed; they did not spell out how this new civil body was to proceed in the execution of their duties regarding the care of the poor. The details of the procedure the overseers adopted revealed in their minute books show that they followed the general pattern that had been set by the vestry. This is not surprising since at least one former vestryman served on the first board of overseers in both Accomac and Pittsylvania, two of the three counties being studied.

The major difference in procedure between the overseers of the poor and the vestry was an outgrowth of the law which established the overseers. The law required that each county be divided into not more than four districts and that the freeholders and housekeepers elect three overseers in each district created. The vestry had supposedly represented the entire parish or county but the actual burden of administering poor relief had fallen upon the two churchwardens. Each overseer was then, in reality, more of a churchwarden than an ordinary vestryman. He was responsible for his proportionate part of the administration of poor relief in his district, and each was required to turn in an account of his expenditures annually. The accounts closely correspond to those formerly turned in by the churchwardens.

Therefore, there were as many reports as there were overseers instead of only two, as had been the custom under the vestry.

The question arises as to how these new civil welfare bodies proceeded to administer the welfare needs of the county, those needs which had formerly been met by the churchwardens. A person or family requiring aid either applied directly to an overseer in his district or his plight was reported to an overseer by a friend, neighbor, or relative. The type of assistance given varied from meeting the small emergency requirements, such as furnishing a half gallon of molasses to a needy person,<sup>11</sup> to providing full support over many years for chronic cases.<sup>12</sup> While each type of case was handled differently, the general pattern was the same as it had been under the vestry.

Chronic cases were handled according to the individual situation, but each case had an appropriation made for it in the annual levy. If the recipient was capable of handling his own finances, the allotment was paid directly to him. However, in a majority of chronic cases the grant was paid to someone else who was ordered to dispense it as needed by the recipient. Nearly always the person handling the case was an overseer past or present, or a county official such as sheriff, deputy sheriff or constable. Blind or afflicted children normally had the appropriation paid to their parents. Children who had lost a parent, in most cases the father, had the grant made to their surviving parent.

The manner of handling cases involving indigent orphans or bastards depended upon the age of the charges. Those too young to work were placed in homes until old enough to be bound out or indentured. Binding out required a court order which the overseers secured by applying to the county



court. The indenture contract was recorded either in the minute book of the overseers of the poor, or in the Court Order Book of the County, or in the Court Minute Book. Girls were indentured until they were eighteen years old and boys until twenty-one. The boys were generally bound to someone who could teach them a trade. The indenture required the orphan to live with the family to whom he was bound, and to obey and serve his master. The family was required to feed, clothe, house, and to teach the boy or girl to read and write. Upon completion of the indenture the orphan was granted his freedom and given a fixed sum of money.

The binding out of orphans and bastards was evidently more than a perfunctory duty performed by the churchwardens and later by the overseers of the poor, for Court Order Books often contain such entries as this:

Ordered on the motion of the churchwardens that Godfrey Hamilton and his wife be summoned to the next court to show cause why she did not deliver up the two poor girls in their custody agreeable to a former order of this court.<sup>13</sup>

George Moore previously bound to Jacob Beare to learn the trade of blacksmith being found to not have the strength is ordered bound to John Hicks to learn the trade of silver-smith.<sup>14</sup>

Sally Melifant sued in court for her freedom dues from Davis Tayler having served her time out and he refusing to release her and then to pay her.<sup>15</sup>

John Lincoln (great-uncle of President Lincoln) reported to the court that the indentured boy John Doyle had runaway before his time was up and Lincoln was ordered to hold Doyle until the next event and Doyle could appear to state any dissatisfaction.<sup>16</sup>

The indigent sick, infirm, and unemployed were cared for in one of two general ways. If assistance or relief was administered in their home, by an outsider, it is referred to as "supporting". Whenever the recipient was removed to the home or premises of the person caring for them

it is labelled "keeping". Frequent entries using these terms are found in both the minute and vestry books, along with entries for nursing and doctoring and burying. The last frequently required four entries: burying, providing planks for the coffin, making the coffin, and digging the grave.

Minor emergency or temporary relief cases requiring immediate attention were generally entered under the heading of "finding", which meant providing for. Such entries as "finding" corn, molasses, a pair of stockings, clothes, a house, firewood, are numerous in record books of both the vestry and overseers. The emergency needs were frequently supplied by friends and neighbors and the bill presented either to a churchwarden or later to an overseer. The officer listed it in his annual report and the donator was reimbursed out of the income produced by the next annual levy.

The third, and most important, responsibility which the overseers of the poor assumed was preparing the annual budget and laying the levy. The law specified that the overseers from all the districts in the county meet yearly in September and present their accounts. These accounts were totalled and divided by the number of tithables—a list of which was furnished by the county clerk—in order to determine the true rate. In order to provide for major emergencies during the ensuing year the true rate was increased, the amount of the increase being based upon past experience or upon plans for a major expenditure such as purchasing land for use as a farm for the poor. The surplus, raised in this manner, formed the depositum and was usually left in the hands of the collector, who, under the overseers of the poor, was nearly always the sheriff. Under the vestry, the collector had generally been a vestryman. In addition to the six percent

fee allowed the collector, he could receive credit at the laying of the next levy for all uncollectable accounts, which are referred to as "insolvents" in all records and minutes.

Major emergency disbursements were made by the collector upon the receipt of an order from the board or a member of it. At the annual meeting, or when called upon to do so, the collector was required to give an account of his handling of all funds. In some instances the depositum was divided among the overseers for use in their districts. Regardless of the method used, the minute books show settlements of accounts by sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, and members of the board both past and present. Sometimes the settlements were difficult to secure and required the threat of court action.

The entire procedure for making up the budget and laying the levy which the overseers of the poor adopted was based upon the procedure formerly used by the vestry.<sup>17</sup> Only in refinement as to detail was there any variance.

Unlike the vestry, the overseers of the poor were not responsible for presenting offenders against morality to the court, a duty that was transferred to the grand jury. However, like the vestry, the overseers received all fines collected for such offences as adultery, fornication,<sup>18</sup> swearing,<sup>19</sup> bastardy,<sup>20</sup> getting drunk on Sunday;<sup>21</sup> and the known fathers of bastards were required to pay a fixed sum annually until the child was three or four years of age.<sup>22</sup> The term "fines collected", which frequently appears in the accounts of the overseers of the poor and churchwardens, were those fines paid for offenses against morality.

The overseers of the poor inherited from the vestry not only the responsibility for executing certain civil duties, they also inherited

certain customs, traditions, and methods of procedure, along with many legal regulations applicable to the vestry. How the overseers in most of the Virginia counties effected the transition from ecclesiastical to secular control over processioning the land, the care of the poor, and preparing the budget and laying the levy cannot be known for very few minute books of the overseers of the poor covering the transitional period 1786-1802 are extant. Fortunately the minute books of the overseers in three representative counties, Accomac, Pittsylvania, and Rockingham, have been preserved.

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<sup>1</sup>Hening, Statutes, XII, 27-30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 272-273.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 573-580.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 712-713.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., XIII, 262-264.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 397-398.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., II, 102.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., III, 82.

<sup>9</sup>"The Vestry Book of Camden Parish, 1767-1852."

<sup>10</sup>"The Vestry Book of St. George's Parish, Accomac County, 1763-1787."

<sup>11</sup>"The Minute Book of the Overseers of the Poor, Accomac County, October 15, 1789."

<sup>12</sup>John Pedder's name appeared on the levy list of the Vestry Book of Camden Parish in 1778 and annually thereafter until the establishment of the overseers of the poor in Pittsylvania County. He was supported by the overseers until 1794.

<sup>13</sup> "Rockingham County Judgments and Court Orders Book Number 1".  
November 27, 1780.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Book Number 2, June 22, 1789.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Book Number 4, April 22, 1793.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., September 22, 1794.

<sup>17</sup> Comparing the laying of the levy at any meeting held for that purpose, by the vestry with any meeting of the overseers of the poor, held for the same purpose and in the same county, will substantiate the statement.

<sup>18</sup> "Rockingham County Judgments and Court Orders Book Number 1."  
March 23, 1779.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Book Number 4, January 27, 1794.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., November 25, 1793.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Book Number 1, March 23, 1779.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Book Number 4, April 22, 1793.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE OPERATION OF THE BOARD OF OVERSEERS OF THE POOR, 1787-1802

In 1786, the year the overseers of the poor were established on a state-wide basis, Accomac, Pittsylvania, and Rockingham counties were each different in age, stage of development, and population trend. Each was located in a different one of the three major geographical sections of the state--tidewater, piedmont, and transmontane--and even can be taken as representative of its particular section. Accomac County was typical of the tidewater where the social, political, economic and religious traditions and customs were stabilized, and population was either static or on the verge of decline. Pittsylvania County, representative of the piedmont section, was in the transitional stage of development. The county had passed beyond the frontier period and was moving toward the pattern of life typical of the tidewater section. Customs and traditions were beginning to take shape, and the county was entering a period of rapid increase in population. Rockingham County, located in and illustrative of the transmontane section, was in the frontier stage of development. Rugged individualism prevailed and survival, establishment of a home, and winning economic security were more important than customs and traditions. The population increased steadily, although slowly, until that time when some of the crudities of frontier life had passed, and then the influx of settlers was at a more rapid pace.<sup>1</sup>

## ACCOMAC COUNTY

Accomac County, on the Eastern Shore, was created in 1663 out of the northern part of Northampton County.<sup>2</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century life here had settled into calm routine with the general acceptance of existing economic and social conditions similar to those in the better known tidewater counties. Slavery provided the labor and tobacco the prime source of revenue. The leading families had built fine estates and risen to a position of social prestige and political influence. And they were staunch supporters of the Established Church.

The coming of the Revolution created the same political upheaval on the Eastern Shore as it did in the other older counties of the state. The growth of dissent paralleled the political upheaval and weakened the Established Church, as it had throughout the state. Dissenters, predominantly Quakers, had long been tolerated in Accomac County, when in 1776 the evangelistic Baptist minister Elijah Baker landed on the Eastern Shore and began preaching without a license. Although imprisoned for fifty-six days and deported, he returned at once. The response to his efforts was immediate and gratifying, and the faith spread rapidly throughout the area. The Established Church was further weakened when the highly regarded Reverend John Lyons of St. George's Parish remained a loyalist after the war began. A Court-martial court indicted him in 1781, and sent him to Williamsburg for trial.<sup>3</sup>

The local conditions contributing to the weakening of the Established Church in the county were compounded in 1779 when the General Assembly permanently cut off all tax support of the church in the state.

The position of the Church rapidly deteriorated and by 1786, when the overseers of the poor were established on a state-wide basis, the vestry of the church was no longer able to fulfill its obligation to care for the poor.

The exact date when the Accomac County overseers of the poor assumed the civil responsibilities of processioning the land, caring for the poor, and preparing the budget and laying the levy cannot be determined. The last levy laid by the vestry of St. George's Parish was recorded on December 6, 1784,<sup>4</sup> and the first recorded meeting of the overseers for laying the levy was October 16, 1789. A levy was laid in each of the intervening years but whether by the vestry or the overseers is not known.<sup>5</sup>

The legal and technical aspects of the transition from ecclesiastical to secular care of the poor in Accomac County were complete by 1787. On October 31 the overseers appointed processioners of the land for the lower district of the county, and on November 27 they met to appoint processioners for the upper district. Four years later, September 5, 1791, as required by law, the overseers again appointed processioners for all the districts in the county. Only partial returns from the processionings are recorded, and there is no further reference to processionings in the overseers' minute book.<sup>6</sup> The processioning of the land was not the most important responsibility of the overseers of the poor, but it was a useful procedure when there was no surveyor. Although there is no definite proof that a surveyor was employed by Accomac County after 1791, this was probably the case. The 1779 revision of the Virginia laws required that a surveyor be appointed in every county. He was "to be nominated,



examined, and passed by the president and professors of William and Mary", and if of good character, commissioned by the governor.<sup>7</sup>

A major responsibility the overseers inherited from the vestry was the care of the poor. The overseers in Accomac followed the same general pattern set by the vestry in performing this function. The same sort of relief was given for similar cases, and both chronic and emergency relief cases continued to appear on the lists presented by the overseers at the annual meeting. The entries on the overseers' lists are more detailed and give more explicit information regarding the appropriation. Detail was one stipulation required by law; the name of the recipient and the purpose for which the appropriation was made had to be shown.

The following excerpts, chosen at random from the minutes of the overseers, demonstrate the great variety of cases that they handled; the care with which they dispensed small, as well as large, benefits; the legal problems they faced; and the frankness with which they met social problems that became their responsibility:

October 5, 1789—to George Marshall for boarding negro Abram.

October 15, 1789—to Elisha Mears for Mr. Townshend.

Traders finding Spencer Pratt  $\frac{1}{2}$  gal. molasses.

1790 list of Edward Ker—to Margaret Hayslop for keeping Teddy Hayslop a bastard to September 1, 1790.

To Nancy Waterfield for keeping William Waterfield orphan.

1790 list of Elisha Mears—to Ann Bunting for keeping Esaw and Susa Bunting bastards of George Poulson.

October 27, 1790—ordered that Southey Satchell gent. give John Elliott notice that the overseers intend to motion

to the court on the second day of the next court for a  
judgt agst him for his mother's estate he detains in his  
hands.

September 3, 1792—to Thomas and Robinson Custis for clothes  
for a poor boy.

September 5, 1794—Thomas Custis for his blind child

" —To John Treackle for rum

" —To Richard Drummon for wine.

March 6, 1797—to Warrington Slayton for Shadrick two years  
and teaching him a trade.

March 3, 1800—to Thomas Bayly for inoculations

August 26, 1802—that no well woman, with a bastard child or  
children be supported by the public.

September 14, 1802—Ordered that Robert Twiford, Southey Satchell  
& John Ball make inquire what expense the parish has been at  
by Leah Turner and Mary West's bastard children, and employ a  
lawer to bring suit against Smith Melson and Benj. Ball  
their reputed fathers.

The general procedure of the overseers in laying the levy was  
virtually the same as that of the vestry. This was to be expected, for  
the law creating the overseers gave to them all the duties, responsibilities,  
and authority of the vestry relative to preparing the budget and laying  
the levy for the care of the poor. Furthermore, two members of the first  
board of overseers in Accomac had served as vestrymen, and one of these,  
Elisha Mears, was elected its first president. It was only natural that  
the overseers should follow a procedure with which they were thoroughly

familiar and should continue to use the same terminology, such as "finding," "keeping," "supporting," and "for the support of."

The main difference in procedure was in the completeness of the information shown in nearly every entry made upon the levy list used to prepare the overseers' annual budget. The entries on the levy list fall into one of four general classifications. One class of entries was the individual account of each overseer. His account covered the charity expenditure made by him during the past year, the individual appropriations for the ensuing year necessary for the care of each of the chronically indigent in the overseer's district, and appropriations to reimburse each person who had made expenditures to aid the poor in the overseer's district during the past year. The second class of entries on the levy list included the accounts of doctors, storekeepers, and mill owners for charity expenditures during the past year. A third class of entries included appropriations for reimbursing the collector and his assistants for the number of insolvents on the list of tithables for the preceding year. The fourth class of entries covered the salary of the clerk of the board and the per diem attendance allowance of each of the overseers. The sum of the appropriations for each of the four classes of entries constituted the known expenditures for the ensuing year. To this sum was added an amount for anticipated emergency relief cases and the collector's commission, usually 6%. The poor rate for the year was determined by dividing the sum of the appropriations for known expenditures, emergency relief, and the collector's commission by the number of tithables in the county.

The collector, usually the sheriff, was responsible for paying all accounts included in the list prepared at the laying of the levy. The

depositum or contingent fund was left in his hands, and he dispensed the funds for emergency relief upon the order of any overseer, or an order from the entire board. The collector was required to keep an account of the expenditures, and to file his report at the next annual meeting. The report was checked against the orders issued by each overseer.

The more careful attention to detail and thoroughness with which the overseers of the poor attended to their duties, added to the fact that they were responsible for a geographical area twice as large as the vestry of St. George's Parish, of necessity led to gradual changes in procedure for the more efficient performance of their duties particularly in regard to the care of the poor. These changes eventually culminated in the establishment of a poor house in 1801. The following table will be helpful in understanding this evolution.

<u>Year of Levy</u>	<u>Number Meetings</u>	<u>Number Entries</u>	<u>Number Tithables</u>	<u>Levy Rate</u>
1789	3	281	3906	4/0
1790	4	260	3878	5/0
1791	2	202	3972	3/3
1792	7	257	3946	5/9
1793	5	207	3980	7/0
1794	Levy not layed until January 1795 so it became the			
1795	4	288	3913	7/6
1796	2	358	3794	8/8 $\frac{1}{2}$
1797	2	389	3778	10/0
1798	2	258	3643	9/0
1799	2	353	3725	9/3
1800	2	263	3774	10/5
1801	1	100	3773	6/5
1802	2	79	3732	6/0

The number of meetings required to lay the annual levy, the total number of charity cases each year, and the steadily rising poor rate, up to 1800, are the chief factors that led the overseers to seek more satisfactory ways of handling the care of the poor. The urgency of the

problem becomes apparent when we compare the data in the above table with the corresponding statistics relative to the care of the poor by the vestry. Only once in twenty-two years did the vestry require more than one meeting to lay the levy. The average annual number of entries for charity cases under the vestry was 49 as compared with the overseers' 253, and the highest number for any one year was 82 in 1779 as compared with 389 in 1797. A comparison of the poor rates is virtually impossible, for the vestry, over the years, made the levy in three mediums: pounds of tobacco, shillings and pence, and war-time paper money.

The first change in the operational procedure of the overseers is shown in the minutes for September 28, 1792, and is minor in nature. The list presented by each overseer at the annual meeting for laying the levy was entered upon the minute book under his name. The change had been authorized by law on December 31, 1789.<sup>8</sup>

A second innovation inaugurated at the same meeting pertained to the handling of the contingent fund. The fund was no longer left in the hands of the sheriff but distributed among the overseers in the following manner:

Samuel Henderson	£38.	0.	0.
John Poulson	30.	0.	0.
Selby Simpson	26.	0.	0.
Southy Satchell	24.	0.	0.
Elisha Mears	24.	0.	0.
Will Drummond	21.	5.	0.

The reason for the unequal distribution probably arises from the fact that Samuel Henderson as a partner in the mercantile firm of Downing and

Henderson<sup>9</sup> no doubt supplied many of the needs of the poor. This new arrangement enabled the overseers to meet the welfare needs of the poor in their district without sending orders to the sheriff.

Both innovations permitted more efficient operation of the overseers' business, and were introduced at this time, no doubt, because five of the six members of this board were newly elected; only Elisha Mears had served as a member of the previous board. Four of the members, in addition to Henderson, were businessmen. Selby Simpson was a contractor,<sup>10</sup> William Drummond,<sup>11</sup> John Poulson,<sup>12</sup> and Elisha Mears<sup>13</sup> were millowners. Obviously these men were bringing their business acumen to bear upon public affairs. The new procedure was followed until the establishment of the poor house in 1801, and only twice did the laying of the levy require over two meetings after 1792. However, with these time-saving changes there also began a noticeable increase in the number of entries lacking the full information required by law. The "to Ezekle Matthews for Arthur Mason" type of entry became more frequent after 1792.

The 1792-1795 board of businessmen serving as overseers continued to seek a better solution to the problem of poor relief, one that would provide adequate care, and, at the same time, reduce the cost. The answer was the establishment of a poor house and farm. The idea was not a new one. As early as May 24, 1768, the vestry of St. George's Parish had ordered the erection of a building at the new church for the care of the poor, but there is no further reference to the matter until January 7, 1782, when the vestry ordered Zerobabel Rogers and George Cutler to try to rent a house and not over 100 acres of land for the use of the poor. On May 4, 1782, one hundred pounds was appropriated for a poor house, and at the meeting on

October 20, 1783, the churchwardens were ordered to procure a farm for the poor. There are no further entries in the vestry book relative to the matter, but the minutes of the overseers of the poor for December 29, 1787, indicate that the poor house and farm had been in operation. At that meeting Zorobabel Rogers presented his account of the money "put into his and George Cutlers hands" in 1782, for a work house. Nine pounds and five shillings appeared due the parish, but the blankets and beds were not accounted for.

Elisha Mears, who was president of the board of overseers when the 1787 settlement was made by Zorobabel Rogers, was also president of the 1792-1795 board. This board included £400 for the poor house in the levy of January 9, 1794. Sometime during that year the overseers purchased 104 acres south-east of Parksley from Southy Simpson and his wife, Hannah.<sup>14</sup> No further reference to the matter appears in the minute book until February 14, 1795, when the overseers included £125 in the 1795 levy for the poor house. At a special meeting held on February 23, 1795, the board issued the following orders:

Ordd, that John Poulson, William Drummond and Selby Simpson purchas land to build a house for the poor of the Parish of Acco(mac) and St. George (which was considered and ordered before the purchas of the land). And that the money Levy'd for that purpose be subject to them for the paym't thereof.

Ordd, that the same persons Superintend the letting out and building the poor house (and the money Levy'd at their Descretion) which is to be 57 feet long, 21 feet wide, a brick wall and two storry high, and to be finish'd, as the Trustees thinks most convenient for the publick good.

The 1792-1795 board was succeeded by a new board after the 1795 triennial election. Only Elisha Mears was re-elected. There is no mention of the poor house in the minute book during the next three years,

probably because the 1795 order appropriating the funds had given the overseers carte blanche to proceed. The land purchased in 1794 was used for a supporting poor farm, and in 1797 the overseers purchased from Charles West forty-five contiguous acres to the east of Parksley.<sup>15</sup> This suggests that it was probably late in 1797, or early in 1798, before construction of the building was begun.

Twelve men, instead of six, as before, were elected overseers of the poor in 1798 in Accomac, indicating the county now had four districts instead of two. No doubt this action became necessary as a result of the large number of charity cases the board handled during the 1795-1798 period. Elisha Mears was again re-elected, and Southy Satchell also returned to the board. Mears was elected president for the tenth time, but the minutes of March 4, 1799 show that John Custis was elected president in "the room of Elisha Mears" deceased. On March 3, 1800, the overseers included £300 in the levy to be used at their discretion for the poor house. The house was completed before October 4, 1800, because on that date the overseers met at the poor house. At this meeting, they ordered John Moore, the steward, to "buy Spelling books for Rachel Shepham To teach the children of the poor", and to draw from the sheriff, John Custis, the \$1000 already levied.<sup>16</sup>

The levy for 1801 laid at the March 2 meeting included £500 for the poor house. Evidently the venture was proving a success, for after one year of operation of the poor house the number of charity cases dropped from 263 to 108 and the rate from 10/5 to 6/5. The remaining meetings of the overseers of the poor for the year were devoted to the operation of the poor house. A rotating system of weekly inspection by two of the overseers



was set up on April 27. The minutes of the June 19 meeting indicate that a matron had been on duty at the poor house, for the sheriff was ordered to pay "Molley Graten £l. 11. 3. the bal of her account for attendance on the poor up to this day." Richard Grimmald's account for building the garden was also approved, as was a regulation requiring that vouchers be presented before any future accounts were paid. The need for this latter regulation is revealed by action taken at the August 29 meeting when a committee was appointed to adjust the accounts of the steward, John Moore, and to pay him off. John A. Bundick, 1792-1795 overseer of the poor, was made the new steward, and on September 2, a committee was appointed to correct "the inventory" of the property of the poor house.

The size of the poor house operation may be gauged from the orders issued to Bundick on September 29. In addition to buying "a horse, yolk steers, wain and wheels", and all the "little matters" necessary for the use of the poor, he was to purchase the following:

5000 pounds of pork	12 bushels of peas
3000 pounds of beef	30 pairs of stockings
500 bushels of corn	6 sides upper leather
200 pounds of coffee	5 sides under leather
200 pounds of sugar	400 yards linen
1 Hogshead molasses	250 yards narrow cloth
12 bushels of wheat	

At the same meeting, a committee was appointed to let out to the lowest bidder, the doctor's place at the poor house. And another committee was instructed to sell the thirty blankets belonging to the poor house, and to pay the money to the steward. Since poor houses were also workhouses,

it is possible that the blankets were ones made by the inmates.

The result of the thorough supervision exercised by the overseers of the poor is made clear in the figures of the levy laid on March 2, 1802. The number of charity cases listed was lower than ever before, while the rate was the lowest one since 1792. If we assume that population trend is reflected by the number of tithables shown in the annual levy lists, the above figures become even more impressive because the reductions were accomplished without any appreciable growth in population.

The Accomac overseers of the poor held sixty-seven meetings between October 31, 1787 and December 28, 1802. Thirty-three of the meetings were for the purpose of laying thirteen levies to provide funds for an average of 264 charity cases annually. The overseers met twelve times to settle accounts with former churchwardens or overseers, sheriffs, and deputy sheriffs. Three meetings were held in connection with processioning, and five times meetings were adjourned due to poor attendance. Two meetings each were devoted to the election of officers, emergency relief cases, and minor routine business matters. On May 3, 1791, the overseers met to vote themselves two days extra pay "which they consider they are entitled to by law, although not employed in laying the levy". They devoted five meetings to the establishment and operation of the poor house. The last meeting in 1802 was held for the purpose of ordering the sale of the parish glebe.

Between 1787 and 1802 thirty-five men served as overseers of the poor; and elections were held every three years beginning in 1789. Ten men served more than one term. Elisha Mears served four terms and was elected president every year until his death in 1798. Southy Satchell also served four terms, 1789-1795 and 1798-1802. David Bowman served three terms

1795-1802, and Peter Delastaticus was elected to three non-consecutive terms. William Matthews, Parker Barnes, Custis Willis, Will Wilburn, John Bull, and John Milby each served two terms. Although the law required a man to serve when elected, it exempted him from serving but once in nine years, and these ten men could have declined after their first term. Whether they served from a sense of civic responsibility or for personal gain is not known, for unlike the vestrymen, the overseers received a per diem remuneration for attendance. Regardless of their motives, these ten overseers and the twenty-five who served only one term attended the meetings 85% of the time. Although unlike the vestry, the overseers were subject to a fine for non-attendance, the first recorded case of fining for non-attendance was in September, 1801, and this fine was later revoked.

The vestry of St. George's Parish, which comprised the lower half of Accomac County, held eighty-eight meetings between 1763 and 1787. Twenty-four of the meetings were devoted to the laying of twenty-two levies to raise funds for the support of the church and for the care for an average of 49 charity cases per year. The vestry met seven times to settle accounts with former churchwardens and collectors, and it met six times for processioning. One meeting was devoted to the discussion of the feasibility of establishing a poor house. The remaining fifty meetings of the vestry had to do with ecclesiastical matters. Thirty-one men served as vestrymen, an average of eight and one-half years in the twenty-four year period, with an average of 70% attendance.

The number of charity entries made at the annual laying of the levy show that the overseers apparently carried a heavier load than had the vestry. Yet, their entries were more detailed, and frequently three

or more entries were made for small appropriations to the same person, in contrast to the vestry custom of making annual lump-sum grants to the needy. Furthermore, the overseers were responsible for a geographical area twice as large as that of St. George's Parish. The evidence clearly indicates that the transition from ecclesiastical to secular care of the poor in Accomac County was accomplished with a minimum of confusion and with little change.

#### PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Pittsylvania County, centrally located on the southern boundary of the state, was carved in 1767 out of the Western part of Halifax County,<sup>17</sup> itself formed only fifteen years before.<sup>18</sup> Some of the settlers were older men moving their families and slaves to more fertile land, some were younger sons of prominent families in the older sections of the state, and many were from the laboring and poorer classes seeking a fresh opportunity.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of background these settlers carried their customs and traditions with them and established "Camden Parish" and a church. The vestry of Camden Parish existed only a few years and from the beginning was handicapped by the strength of the dissenter movement in the new county. The first Separate Baptist Church in Virginia was established there nine years before the county was created, and had gained a substantial following by the time the vestry came into existence.

By 1786, when the overseers of the poor assumed the civil responsibilities formerly exercised by the vestry, the county had reached the transitional stage of development. The frontier mode of life was passing while the social, economic, and political customs exhibited in the older counties, had not crystallized in Pittsylvania County. The more daring and individualistic leaders, such as John Donelson, were moving on to

the west. Donelson had been one of the original vestrymen and justices of the peace.<sup>20</sup> Other pioneers and county leaders—men like Samuel Harris, a favorite of the people, churchwarden, member of the House of Burgesses, justice of the peace, and captain in the Militia—<sup>21</sup> had deserted the Established Church and become a moving spirit in the vigorous Separate Baptists.<sup>22</sup>

Not only was dissent strong in the county, but the spirit of Methodism was pervading the Established Church. Colonel John Wilson, one of the original vestrymen and justices of the peace in the county, and a founder of Danville had become a Methodist.<sup>23</sup> The position of the Established Church was further weakened when compulsory tax support of the church was suspended in 1776, making the care of the poor a more difficult problem for the vestry.

Despite the weakness of the Established Church in Pittsylvania County, the vestrymen, as individuals were highly regarded for their leadership and five of them were elected as members of the first board of overseers for the county in 1786. The board chose for its clerk Crispin Shelton, Jr.—the son, grandson, and nephew of former vestrymen, and the nephew of the clerk of the vestry. His father and uncle were also overseers of the poor.

Under such circumstances, it was almost inevitable that this new secular body should adopt the procedural techniques and policies of the vestry for processioning, caring for the poor, and preparing the budget and laying the levy.

The court records of Pittsylvania County do not show that the court ever ordered the overseers to appoint processioners, and the minutes

of the overseers of the poor do not show that processioners were ever appointed by them. John Donelson had been employed as the surveyor when the county was organized in 1767. Evidently the county had continued to employ a surveyor.

In the care of the poor, the overseers closely followed the procedure of the vestry. The last meeting of the vestry before disestablishment was held on February 25, 1785, for the purpose of laying the levy. Nine of the twelve vestrymen were present and made appropriation for seventeen charity cases, on an annual basis. The first levy laid by the overseers of the poor was for the year 1787, although the meeting was not held until September 1, 1788. Appropriations were made for seventeen charity cases on an annual basis, eight of which were provided for by the last levy of the vestry, and the amount provided for each of the eight was the same in both levies. The only departure from the pattern set by the vestry was that the overseers gave the appropriation directly to fewer of the recipients and tended more to have someone else handle the finances of the claimant. This same general pattern was followed by the overseers throughout the fifteen year period covered.

The lists prepared by the overseers of the poor for the fifteen levies laid by them from 1787 through 1802 show none of the detail and give little of the information so abundant in the minute book of the Accomac overseers. The Pittsylvania overseers' entries are primarily the records of lump-sum grants for an entire year's support. There are a total of 433 entries, 131 of which are direct grants to the recipient, 251 for support, six for parent support of an orphan, nineteen for finding, five for burying, twenty for keeping, and one for carrying a relief case back to his home

county. The names of several recipients of relief which had appeared on the lists of the vestry continue to appear on the overseers of the poor lists. John Pedder received assistance until 1794; John Bolton and Thomas Doss until 1800; Elizabeth Prevett and Ann Grigory until 1788; John Browner and wife until his death in 1797 and she until 1799; and Patience Dalton got aid for her two blind children until her death in 1789, while the children continued to be aided until 1802. It was the chronic cases of indigency rather than the emergencies that received the major attention of the overseers in Pittsylvania County.

The preparation of the budget and the laying of the levy was more routine and perfunctory in Pittsylvania than in Accomac County as the following table demonstrates:

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY  
Annual Levies by the Overseers of the Poor

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number Meeting</u>	<u>Charity Entries</u>	<u>Number Tithables</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Sept. 1, 1788)		17	3019	7 lb. tobacco
Sept. 1, 1788) for 1787	1	19	3019	6 lb. "
Sept. 7, 1789	1	16	3010	5 lb. "
Sept. 6, 1790	1	16	3162	8 lb. "
Oct. 1, 1791	1	23	3163	7 lb. "
Sept. 3, 1792	1	21	3325	9½d
Sept. 2, 1793	1	22	3575	8½d
Sept. 2, 1794	1	23	3588	8½d
	No levy for 1795			
Mar. 22, 1796	1	23	3600	10½d
Sept. 4, 1797	2	54	3800	5½d
Sept. 22, 1798	1	30	3734	1/1
Sept. 2, 1799	1	36	4023	1/1
Sept. 1, 1800	1	41	4315	1/0½
Sept. 7, 1801	1	41	4504	1/3
Sept. 6, 1802	1	51	4880	1/4½

The overseers of the poor of Pittsylvania met only sixteen times in fifteen years, and only one meeting was for a purpose other than laying

the levy. The charity case load shows a slow but steady increase. The growing number of tithables indicate the population growth was also steady and after 1798 more rapid.<sup>24</sup> The levy rate, except in 1797, shows a similar increase. The records of the overseers reflect the uninterrupted development of the young county and suggest that by 1802 it was approaching the end of its transition from the frontier to the more settled life of the eastern counties. Not until the second decade of the nineteenth century did it become necessary for the overseers of the poor to establish a poor house as the overseers of Accomac had done in 1800.

Unlike those in the older county, the overseers in Pittsylvania meticulously required in accordance with the law that the collector of the levy post bond, which are recorded in the minute book. They also entered the indentures for orphans and bastards that were bound out. Not until 1796 did they draw pay for their services, as allowed by law.

Whether elections for the overseers of the poor were held as regularly in Pittsylvania as in Accomac County is not clear from the records. However, it is known that elections were held every three years beginning in 1792 as required by law.<sup>25</sup> Thirty-seven men served on the board of overseers in Pittsylvania between 1787-1802. Eight of the members served two terms, six served three terms, one served four terms, and one member served five terms. During the fifteen year period the average attendance was a fraction below 75%, and there is no record of fines being levied for non-attendance. The overseers handled an average of twenty-eight charity cases per year.

The care of the poor in Pittsylvania County was the responsibility of the vestry for eighteen years before the separation of church and state,



and the creation of the overseers of the poor. During that period the seventy-nine men who served as vestrymen attended vestry meetings 70% of the time, and served an average of eight and one-half years each. Prior to 1776, when tax support of the church was cut off there was only one change in the membership of the vestry. After 1776 seven members resigned, and Lodowick Tuggle refused to serve when elected in 1781. The vestry met thirty-three times in eighteen years, devoted eighteen meetings to laying the levy, and handled an average of fourteen charity cases per year.

As was the case in Accomac County the transition from ecclesiastical to secular care of the poor in Pittsylvania County was made smoothly. The overseers of the poor adopted the procedure of the vestry. The overseers had a slightly better attendance record and 43% of them served more than one term. Not until 1796 is there a record of the overseers accepting their per diem allowance for attendance. Service without pay and beyond the legally required time indicates that the overseers of the poor in Pittsylvania County possessed a strong sense of civic responsibility.

#### ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

Rockingham County, located in the north-central part of the Shenandoah Valley on the present boundary of West Virginia, did not come into existence until 1778.<sup>26</sup> Carved out of Augusta County, it was in the frontier phase of development when the overseers of the poor were established in 1786. The same act that created the county ordered "the inhabitants . . . to meet before the First day of May 1780 to elect a vestry of twelve." The order was promptly executed and Daniel Smith, John Thomas, George Boswell, Gavin Hamilton, Benjamin Harrison, and William Herring

"took the Oath of Fidelity to the State as vestrymen" on May 25, 1778.<sup>27</sup>

The following day Leonard Herring was sworn in as vestryman.

The election of a vestry was, no doubt, primarily for the purpose of executing the civil responsibilities of that body. The Established Church had never been strong in the county populated almost exclusively by dissenters. The strength of the church rested upon two small chapels that had been founded in 1747,<sup>28</sup> and the position of the church was further weakened in 1776, when the General Assembly cut off all tax support of the church throughout the state.

During the long weary years of that memorable struggle for American independence the parish seems to have declined, and after the close of the war both of the above mentioned houses were neglected and allowed to go to ruin. And for more than sixty years there is no record of any regular organized<sup>29</sup> religious work being done in the parish by Episcopalians....

By 1786 the Established Church had ceased to exist in Rockingham County, and under such conditions it is hardly possible that the vestry ever attained a strong position, but it did administer poor relief. The minutes of the overseers of the poor for August 26, 1788, shows a settlement with the former churchwardens as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number Tithables</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
1782	1250	3d	£15. 12. 6.
1783	1459	1d	6. 1. 7.
1784	1444	4d	<u>24. 1. 4.</u>
			£45. 15. 5.
Fines put into the hands of Michael Null ...			2. 0. 0.
Received of Andrew Shanklin ...			5. 0.
Received of James Hinton			<u>5. 0.</u>
			£48. 5. 5.

A list of expenditures follows, including the six per cent allowed the collector. The balance due "from Leonard Herring late Warden" was £12. 13. 3., which was corrected at the meeting on October 4, 1788 and showed to be £3. 18. 3. "due from Herring to the overseers of the poor."

The Rockingham County overseers of the poor assumed the responsibilities, formerly exercised by the vestry, soon after the passage of the 1786 overseers law. On March 29, 1786, the county court ordered elections for overseers of the poor to be held in each of the four districts in the county on April 20, and appointed a superintendent of election in each district. The sheriff was instructed to notify the voters of the time and place for the election.<sup>30</sup> The returns of the election are not recorded, and the first complete minutes of the board are dated October 29, 1787, but the overseers of the poor were functioning in 1786 and laid the levy for that year.<sup>31</sup>

Although we know the overseers of the poor promptly took over the civil responsibilities formerly exercised by the vestry, it is impossible without a vestry book, to determine what, if any, procedural changes were initiated by them. The analysis of the performance of the overseers of the poor in Rockingham County must be based upon a comparison with their counterparts in Accomac and Pittsylvania Counties.

Like the Pittsylvania overseers, the Rockingham County overseers of the poor failed to leave any record of appointing processioners. The reason was probably the same in both cases--surveying was replacing pro-cessioning as the means of determining the boundary lines of land. At the first meeting of the Rockingham County Court, April 27, 1778, Thomas Lewis was sworn in as county surveyor. However, unlike Pittsylvania County, two entries in the Court Judgments and Orders Book show that processioning had not been abandoned completely. On August 25, 1795, the court ordered that processioners be appointed in each military district of the county.<sup>32</sup> There is no record of returns being made on this order. On December 28, 1795, the following significant order appears:

Richard Herring and William Devier processioners of the county reported a dispute between John Devier and Isaac Miner about boundaries and had refused to have boundaries processioned. The court orders the surveyor of the county with a jury of twelve men to go to the boundaries in dispute and lay out the boundary and report to the next court.<sup>33</sup>

The Rockingham County overseers handled the problem of the care of the poor in much the same manner as did the Pittsylvania County overseers. The vast majority of the appropriations for individuals were of the lump-sum annual-grant type and for chronic cases. In the sixteen year period, 1787-1802 inclusive, there are 174 entries in the minute book for poor relief, and these included only forty-nine names. Twenty-four names appear once, sixteen appear two to seven times, seven are shown seven to eleven times, and two names occur over eleven times. In only three of the 174 cases was the appropriation paid directly to the recipient; the remainder fall into the class of supporting, a majority of which were paid to overseers or known county officials for handling. Emergency relief cases, such as "David Brumfield be paid £l. 7. 0. for boarding Nancy McCue and two children for nine weeks", are very few.<sup>34</sup>

The entries are fuller in the Rockingham County minutes than in those of Pittsylvania County and are rather more like the detailed entries of the Accomac overseers' minutes. There is sufficient information to trace the development of a chronic case through attempts to remedy the condition to the death and burial of the recipient. The binding out of orphans and bastards is seldom mentioned in the minutes book of the Rockingham overseers of the poor, and no indentures are recorded. However, a cursory check of the county court order books shows that finding homes for orphans and bastards was evidently a major function of the board. At

least 221 cases of binding are shown, and in nearly every case the older boys were bound out to learn such trades as saddle-maker, tanner, blacksmith, weaver, wagon-maker, wheel-wright, gunsmith, shoemaker, stone-mason, carpenter, joiner, mill-wright, tailor, miller, silversmith, hatter and maker of gunpowder. The overseers evidently kept an eye on those they bound out, since fourteen cases are on record of children being moved from unsatisfactory conditions and rebound. The court records also show many cases of children being removed from the home of their parents, who were unable to provide for and educate them, and being bound out by the overseer of the poor.

The Rockingham overseers of the poor evidently assumed more responsibility for the care of the poor than had their predecessors, the vestry. From the election of the vestry in 1778 to the establishment of the overseers in 1786, many entries in the court orders books indicate that the relief as administered by the vestry was not adequate. During the eight year life of the vestry the court orders book contains such entries as the following:

"The Court taking into consideration the distress situation of Ann Gum and two babes widow and orphans of Claypool Gum a soldier from this County who died in the services of the States recommend her to the board of auditors for such relief as they think proper for her distressed circumstances."<sup>35</sup>

The first recorded minutes of the Rockingham overseers of the poor, October 29, 1788, show that appropriation was made to James Dyer for the care of the Gum orphans. After 1786, court orders for poor relief cease to appear in the court order books.

The procedure of the Rockingham overseers of the poor in laying the levy is not as clearly defined as it is in the Accomac and Pittsylvania

minute books. The Rockingham overseers did not have experienced vestrymen serving on the board, and evidently had no vestry book to serve as a model. The minutes of the overseers meetings for laying the levy show experimentation and a gradual settling into a definite pattern by 1802. Prior to that date the total amount of the annual appropriations are not shown in the minutes, and although later entries order that appropriations be paid out of the depositum, no provision for a depositum is shown in the laying of the levy.

The first entry in the minutes of the earlier meetings for laying the levy lists the number of tithables and the rate for the year. This entry is followed by the ones for charity grants and routine business of the overseers. The last entries are for the clerk's salary and the per diem pay of the overseers, which indicate that all the meetings of the overseers were not recorded in the minute book.<sup>36</sup>

The following table gives statistical information relative to the levies laid by the Rockingham County overseers of the poor:

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Number of Tithables</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Annual Rate</u>
Oct. 29, 1787	1610	5	6d
Jan. 9, 1788	2070	6	8d
Sept. 7, 1789	1824	7	1d
Sept. 6, 1790	1985	8	7d
Sept. 5, 1791	1987	8	6d
Sept. 3, 1792	2174	12	8d
Sept. 14, 1793	2180	11	7d
Apr. 5, 1795	2360	15	1/3d
Mar. 14, 1796	2356	13	1/6d
Mar. 6, 1797	2322	14	1/8d
Oct. 7, 1797	2461	11	11 cents
Sept. 25, 1798	2365	10	21 cents
Sept. 21, 1799	2506	12	27 cents
Sept. 13, 1800	2631	17	34 cents
Sept. 7, 1801	2656	15	23 cents
Sept. 13, 1802	2755	10	17 cents

The overseers of the poor held thirty-five recorded meetings between October 29, 1787, and September 2, 1802, inclusive. Eighteen of the meetings were held for the purpose of laying of the annual levy, and only twice did this require over one meeting. Ten of the meetings were adjourned for lack of attendance, two meetings were devoted to the election of officers, and five to the settlement of accounts with former collectors. The average attendance at the twenty-five meetings for conducting business was less than six members.

Further statistical study of the Rockingham overseers of the poor is virtually impossible, and all indications are that the board rarely, if ever, reached the maximum membership allowed by law. A check of the court order books relative to elections ordered, election returns, and court appointments to the board fails to show the number of men serving at any given time. A cross-check of the court order books and the minute book indicates that the maximum membership serving at one time was eight. The election returns for February 23, 1795, show that no voters turned out in two districts,<sup>37</sup> and the same thing occurred at the next election on June 26, 1798.<sup>38</sup> In both instances the court appointed six members of the board, but two of the newly appointed members evidently did not serve because their names do not appear in the minute book.

The Rockingham County overseers did not inherit from the vestry a well-established and smoothly operating system for administering poor relief. The predominance of dissent in a frontier county made it impossible for the vestry to perfect an adequate organization for the care of the poor. From time to time it was necessary for the court to supplement the efforts of the vestrymen and to make special appropriations out of the

county general funds in order to meet the needs of the indigent. When the overseers assumed the responsibilities of the vestry in 1786 they continued the trial and error methods of their predecessors. Not until 1802 did the overseers become as well organized as their counterparts in Accomac and Pittsylvania counties had been in 1786.

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The transition in the care of the poor from the vestry to the overseers of the poor in Accomac, Pittsylvania and Rockingham counties was made smoothly, between 1786 and 1802. Any changes in administration that occurred or any developments that resulted from the transfer were more the result of the social and economic conditions in the individual county than they were the results of the revolutionary implication of the transfer itself.

Accomac County had passed its zenith by 1786, the population was virtually static and would begin to decline after 1795. Like the whole tidewater section of the state, the county had an agrarian economy based upon tobacco, and over a century of tobacco raising had exhausted the soil and new land was available only in the west. No longer were the well-to-do able to maintain a large family of children, and frequently grandchildren, in the style to which they had become accustomed. The small farmer with few, if any, slaves, was unable to survive. The laborer, whether skilled or unskilled, was finding it difficult to earn a living. Some of the younger sons of the well-to-do, the small farmer, the skilled and unskilled labor, if financially able, were emigrating to the west. It was a pattern of emigration that was to continue in the tidewater section of the



state for over half a century. The emigration left behind those least able to care for themselves, the aged, the permanently disabled and unfit, and the chronically poor. The number of charity cases in Accomac increased in the face of declining population (it declined 4% between 1786 and 1802) forcing the poor rates to rise annually, and making it necessary to arrange for a more economical method of handling the problem. The solution was found in the establishment of a poor house and farm. The solution in Accomac County would have almost certainly been the same whether poor relief had been administered by the vestry or by the overseers of the poor.

Pittsylvania County, recently on the frontier, was by 1786 expanding its agrarian economy and developing social and political customs similar to those of the tidewater. The fertile soil was conducive to the successful cultivation of tobacco, a chief source of income. The expanding economy increased the demand for skilled and unskilled labor. The population was growing rapidly—it increased 60% between 1786 and 1802—and was composed of a younger and more vigorous people than those of Accomac County; hence the number of indigent and chronically ill was a much smaller percentage of the population. The care of the poor under the administration of the vestry had been adequately handled, although the Established Church was never strong in the county. The expanding population after 1786, when the overseers of the poor replaced the vestry, offset the annual increase in the number of charity cases, and the average poor rate between 1792 and 1802 was eleven pence, as compared with an average rate of eight shillings in Accomac County. Under such conditions it is to be expected that the transition from ecclesiastical to secular care of the poor was made easily.

Rockingham County between 1786 and 1802 was a frontier, characterized by individualism and self-sufficiency slowly giving way to an awakening sense of community responsibility. The transition was slow, and the court records are filled with petty suits over small debts, administration of estates, and property rights, and show that justice was frequently meted out promptly and harshly. An agrarian economy was replacing trapping and hunting, but due to the county's geographical location, tobacco was not the basis of the developing agrarian economy, and the levy was never laid in tobacco as it was in Pittsylvania and Accomac counties. The Rockingham County population increased 50% between 1789 and 1802; the people were of hardy stock and a vast majority of the charity cases were of the chronically indigent type. The care of the poor was in its beginning stage; not until 1802 did the overseers of the poor develop a clearly defined procedure for laying the levy.

The creation of the new institution, the overseers of the poor, in Virginia, was a result of the separation of church and state, which, in turn, was an outgrowth of the Revolutionary War. The transfer of the care of the poor from an ecclesiastical to a secular body was revolutionary, and the ease with which the transition was made was enhanced by the eighteenth century philosophy that the educated and well-to-do should rule and hold the positions of leadership. This philosophy applied to all offices, whether elective or appointive, in the civil, religious, military or business life of the state, county, and local community. The election of men other than the community leaders to serve as overseers of the poor would be a revolutionary change in the political and social thought of the eighteenth century. Although the overseers followed the procedures and

practices of the vestry the question arises regarding who these men were that were elected as overseers of the poor.

One hundred and one men served as overseers of the poor in Accomac, Pittsylvania, and Rockingham counties between 1787 and 1802. A partial check of the county records shows that a majority of the overseers were leaders in other areas of community and county life. Some of the overseers were engaged in business affairs. Five of them were merchants;<sup>39</sup> ten owned grist mills or sawmills, while Elisha Mears and John Foulson each owned two mills.<sup>40</sup> Three of the overseers operated taverns,<sup>41</sup> and one erected and operated the government tobacco warehouse in Harrisonburg.<sup>42</sup> William Cravens of Rockingham County was granted a peddler's license by the county court in April 1800.<sup>43</sup> Construction and contracting was the business of three of the overseers,<sup>44</sup> and David Hunt, one of the three, built the courthouse in Pittsylvania County.<sup>45</sup> Charles Molain was a cabinet-maker,<sup>46</sup> and Carter John Bull was probably a slave trader.<sup>47</sup> Two of the overseers owned tanneries and saddle-making shops.<sup>48</sup>

In the religious life of their community eleven of the overseers were vestrymen,<sup>49</sup> two were members of the Presbyterian Church,<sup>50</sup> three were Baptists,<sup>51</sup> while one, Griffith Dickenson, was a Baptist minister. Seven overseers were members of the Methodist Church,<sup>52</sup> and Colonel John Wilson of Pittsylvania County was an early leader of the Methodist movement.<sup>53</sup> Robert Harrison and William Cravens were nominated as trustees of the Methodist school in Harrisonburg.<sup>54</sup> One overseer was a member of the Reformed Church,<sup>55</sup> and another served as lay reader in the Established Church for several years.

Aside from inheritance, the field of civil affairs offered the man of the eighteenth century the quickest opportunity to rise to a position

of leadership and influence in his community, and as a group the overseers were well represented in the field of elective and appointive offices. Seven overseers served as sheriff,<sup>57</sup> four were members of the House of Delegates,<sup>58</sup> and two were defeated in their bid for election as delegate.<sup>59</sup> The position of deputy sheriff was held by six overseers,<sup>60</sup> five served as constable,<sup>61</sup> one as clerk of the county court,<sup>62</sup> and twenty-four were members of the county court.<sup>63</sup> After serving as overseer of the poor John A. Bundick, of Accomac County, became superintendent of the poor house and farm. David Hunt served as land commissioner of Pittsylvania County. Five of the overseers were prominent in the early days of the Revolution and served on either the county committee of correspondence or the committee of safety.<sup>64</sup> In addition to owning much property, operating a sawmill and tannery, and being a leader in the Baptist Church, John Lincoln served as surveyor in Rockingham County.<sup>65</sup> Eight of the overseers were appointed trustees of newly chartered towns.<sup>66</sup> Thomas Parker served as clerk of a committee of Accomac County citizens to draw up a petition opposing the war with Great Britain in 1812.<sup>67</sup> The county court records have many entries appointing men who served as overseers to appraise and to settle estates, while the Rockingham court records show that overseers of the poor were frequently appointed to supervise the laying out and construction of roads.

The overseers of the poor were well represented in the militia. Officers in the militia were commissioned by the governor upon the recommendation of the county justices of peace. Four overseers served as colonels or lieutenant-colonels,<sup>68</sup> three were majors,<sup>69</sup> and fourteen were appointed captains in the local militia.<sup>70</sup> There were seven lieutenants, six ensigns,<sup>71</sup>

and one midshipman among the overseers.<sup>72</sup> James Davis served as commissary for the Rockingham County militia in the Revolution,<sup>73</sup> and John Ferkey supplied the militia with beef.<sup>74</sup> In addition to the overseers who were appointed to military office, several were recommended to the governor but not commissioned.

The ownership of property was a first step in attaining community recognition in eighteenth-century society, and the amount of property owned was frequently a determining factor of the owner's position in society. The overseers of the poor were property holders. Four of them owned 1000 or more acres of land,<sup>75</sup> twenty-six possessed between 500 and a 1000 acres,<sup>76</sup> and twenty-two were the proprietors of less than 500 acres.<sup>77</sup> Edward Ker had extensive holdings in Accomac, Northampton, and Gloucester counties.<sup>78</sup> Colonel John Wilson of Pittsylvania County owned sufficient property to be able to will a home, stock, and furniture to each of his eleven children.<sup>79</sup> Eleven of the overseers owned town property in addition to their holdings in the County.<sup>80</sup> James Devier was the founder and promoter of Rocktown, which later became Harrisonburg, and until his death about 1790 the court order books have innumerable entries of suits for debts brought by him. Seven of the overseers owned many slaves,<sup>81</sup> and William Selby of Accomac County left his estate to his slaves and gave them their freedom at his death in 1793.<sup>82</sup> Two of the wheeled carriages in Pittsylvania County were owned by overseers of the poor in 1793, and the will of David Hunt of the same county mentions his large library.<sup>83</sup>

The overseers of the poor in Accomac, Pittsylvania, and Rockingham Counties in the ownership of property, in assuming positions of leadership in the civil, religious, business, and military affairs, in

processioning the land, in the care of the poor, and in preparing the budget and laying the levy, were the counterparts of their predecessors, the vestrymen. In the three counties, the transition from ecclesiastical to secular care of the poor was made within the eighteenth century formula that the educated and well-to-do should rule. No social revolution occurred and the institution, the overseers of the poor, survived until 1938.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The population trends are based upon the tithable lists shown on pages 30, 41, and 48. Between 1789 and 1802 the population of Accomac decreased, by 4% and in Pittsylvania population increased 60%, and in Rockingham 50%.

<sup>2</sup>Morgan P. Robinson. Virginia Counties: Those Resulting from Virginia Legislation (Richmond, 1916), p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>Ralph T. Whitelaw. Virginia's Eastern Shore (Richmond, 1950), II, 1404.

<sup>4</sup>Prior to the disestablishment of the church the County had two parishes, St. George's in the southern half and Accomac Parish in the northern half. There is no vestry book of Accomac Parish. Therefore the overseers of the poor were responsible for a geographical area twice as large as that of the vestry of St. George's Parish.

<sup>5</sup>The overseers' minute book shows that a settlement of the collectors' accounts for 1785 and 1786 was made on September 2, 1788. On October 16, 1789 the deputy sheriffs were given credit for the insolvents in their districts for 1787 and 1788.

<sup>6</sup>Pages 7 through 28 and 71 through 79 are missing from the minute book. No returns are shown for 1787 and only partial returns for 1791.

<sup>7</sup>Hening, Statutes, X, 53.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., XII, 573-580.

<sup>9</sup>Whitelaw, II, 1320.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 1037.

<sup>11</sup>"Accomac County Will Book, 1796-1798," p. 243.

<sup>12</sup>"District Court Records, Wills and Deeds, 1789-1799," p. 441.

- 13 "Accomac County Will Book, 1798-1800," p. 40.
- 14 Whitelaw, II, 1091.
- 15 Ibid., 1131.
- 16 Note the change to the use of dollars.
- 17 Hening, Statutes, VIII, 205-208.
- 18 Ibid., VI, 252-254.
- 19 The first tithable list of Pittsylvania County shows property owned, slaves and land, in the county by an owner who was listed as a tithable elsewhere. This was true of George Jefferson of Mecklenburg County. Usually this indicated intent to eventually move to more fertile land when the home soil became exhausted. A survey of the wills and deeds books show younger sons of prominent eastern families such as the Harrisons were taking up land in the west.
- 20 The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXIII (1915), 80.
- 21 Ibid., XXIV (1916), p. 187.
- 22 Ibid., XXIII (1915), p. 80.
- 23 Francis Asbury, The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury. (Ed.) Elmer T. Clark et al. (Nashville, 1958), I, 373.
- 24 Except for 1798.
- 25 The minutes of the meeting on September 3, 1792, show eight new members present. No meeting was held in 1795, but there were two new members present at the meeting on March 26, 1796, and four new members attended the September 22, 1798, meeting, and seven new members were present at the meeting on September 7, 1801.
- 26 Hening, Statutes, IX, 420.
- 27 "Rockingham County Judgments and Orders Book Number 1," May 25, 1778.
- 28 Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. XXXIII (1925), 76.
- 29 John W. Wayland, A History of Rockingham County (Dayton, Virginia, 1912.) p. 251.
- 30 "Rockingham County Court Judgements and Orders Book Number 2," March 29, 1786.

<sup>31</sup>A partial page preceding the first complete set of minutes shows a 6% allowance to the collector of the 1786 levy. Furthermore, on June 26, 1786, the Court Judgements and Orders Book Number 2 shows the court ordered the overseers to bind out three children. Rockingham County Court Minute Book, April 27, 1778.

<sup>32</sup>"Rockingham County Court Judgements and Orders Book Number 5," August 25, 1795.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Dec. 28, 1795.

<sup>34</sup>"Minute Book of the Overseers of the Poor." September 5, 1791.

<sup>35</sup>"Rockingham County Court Judgements and Orders Book Number 1," October 23, 1780.

<sup>36</sup>In 1788 some of the overseers were paid for as many as five days' attendance, although there is only one recorded meeting for that year and the meeting lasted only one day.

<sup>37</sup>"Rockingham County Court Judgements and Orders Book Number 4."

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Number 5.

<sup>39</sup>Merchants: Parker Barnes, David Bowman, Samuel Henderson, Thomas Parker, Charles West, all in Accomac County.

<sup>40</sup>Grist and Saw Mills: Parker Barnes, John Burton, William Drummond, John Milby, John Poulson, William Selby, George Scarborough, Elisha Mears in Accomac; and John Lincoln and Peter Conrad in Rockingham.

<sup>41</sup>Tavern owners: Thomas Parker and Charles West in Accomac; and James Devier in Rockingham.

<sup>42</sup>Warehouse owner: James Devier, Rockingham.

<sup>43</sup>Peddler: William Gravens, Rockingham.

<sup>44</sup>Contractors: Southey Satchell and Selby Simpson in Accomac; David Hunt in Pittsylvania.

<sup>45</sup>Clement, p. 207.

<sup>46</sup>Cabinet maker: Charles McLain in Rockingham.

<sup>47</sup>Slave trader: Carter John Bull in Accomac.

<sup>48</sup>Tannery & Saddle-making: Robert Twiford in Accomac; John Lincoln in Rockingham.



<sup>49</sup> Vestrymen: Elisha Mears, John Custis, and Thomas Parker in Accomac; Reuben Payne, Abraham Shelton, Armistead Shelton, Joshua Stone, and Lodowick Tuggle in Pittsylvania; Leonard Herring in Rockingham.

<sup>50</sup> Presbyterians: Edward Ker and John S. Ker in Accomac.

<sup>51</sup> Baptists: Allen Stokes and Griffith Dickenson in Pittsylvania; John Lincoln in Rockingham.

<sup>52</sup> Methodists: George Adams, Clement McDaniel, John Wilson, and Armistead Shelton in Pittsylvania; William Craven, Robert Harrison, and Samuel McWilliams in Rockingham.

<sup>53</sup> Francis Asbury, The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury. (Ed.) Elmer T. Clark et al., (Nashville, 1958), I, 373.

<sup>54</sup> John W. Wayland, A History of Rockingham County (Dayton, Virginia, 1912), p. 283.

<sup>55</sup> Reformed Church: Peter Conrad in Rockingham.

<sup>56</sup> Lay reader: Elisha Mears in Accomac.

<sup>57</sup> Sheriffs: John Custis in Accomac; David Hunt, William Harrison, James Johnson, Abraham Shelton, Vincent Shelton, and Joshua Stone in Pittsylvania.

<sup>58</sup> House of Delegates: George Huston and Francis Kirtley in Rockingham; William Harrison and Joshua Stone in Pittsylvania.

<sup>59</sup> Defeated Candidates to House of Delegates: James Johnson and William Swanson in Pittsylvania.

<sup>60</sup> Deputy Sheriffs: John Bull in Accomac; William Craven, James Davis, Joseph Fawcett, Reuben Moore, and Samuel McWilliams in Rockingham.

<sup>61</sup> Constables: John Bull in Accomac; Jacob Custard, George Huston, Mathias Lair, and Reuben Moore in Rockingham.

<sup>62</sup> Clerk of the County Court: Samuel McWilliams in Rockingham.

<sup>63</sup> Justices of the Peace: James Dyer, George Huston, Francis Kirtley, Mathias Lair, John Lincoln, John Perkey and John Rush in Rockingham; George Adams, John Eriscoe, Robert Harrison, William Harrison, David Hunt, Philip Jenkins, James Johnson, Clement McDaniel, Reuben Pain, Armistead Shelton, Vincent Shelton, John Smith, Joshua Stone, William Wilkinson, James M. Williams, John Wilson, and William Witcher in Pittsylvania.

<sup>64</sup> Committees of Safety and Correspondence: William Selby in Accomac; Isaac Clements, Abraham Shelton, John Wilson, and William Witcher in Pittsylvania.

<sup>65</sup>John W. Wayland, Virginia Valley Records (Strasburg, Virginia, 1930), p. 57.

<sup>66</sup>Town Trustees: Edward Ker in Accomac; James Devier and George Huston in Rockingham; George Adams, Robert Harrison, William Harrison, Thomas Smith, and William Ware in Pittsylvania.

<sup>67</sup>Ralph T. Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore (Richmond, 1951), Vol. II, 1408; the entire petition covers pages 1408-1413.

<sup>68</sup>Colonels or Lt-Colonels: William Selby and Thomas Parker in Accomac; John Wilson in Pittsylvania; John Rush in Rockingham.

<sup>69</sup>Majors: John Poulson, and Thomas Parker in Accomac; William Harrison in Pittsylvania.

<sup>70</sup>Captains: Will Justice, Charles Sneed, and Thomas Parker in Accomac; Isaac Clement, Abraham Shelton, James Soyars, Lodwick Tuggle, and William Witcher in Pittsylvania; James Davis, Robert Harrison, George Huston, Mathias Lair, Reuben Moore, and John Rush in Rockingham.

<sup>71</sup>Ensigns: Elisha Mears, and Charles Stockley in Accomac; Armistead Shelton and Thomas Smith in Pittsylvania; Joseph Fawcett and Robert Harrison in Rockingham.

<sup>72</sup>Midshipman: Thomas Parker Jr. in Accomac.

<sup>73</sup>"Rockingham Court Minute Book," March 27, 1781.

<sup>74</sup>"Rockingham Court Judgements and Orders Book Number 1," April 24, 1786.

<sup>75</sup>Owners of over 1000 acres: Charles Stockley, and George Scarborough in Accomac; John Wilson in Pittsylvania; Robert Harrison in Rockingham.

<sup>76</sup>Owners of between 500 and 1000 acres: Thomas Fletcher, James Gillet, Samuel Henderson, Edward Ker, John S. Ker, Elisha Mears, John Poulson, Southey Satchell, William Selby, and Charles West in Accomac; Isaac Clements, William Harrison, David Hunt, Abraham Shelton, Vincent Shelton, Matthew Tanner, Creed Tanner, William Witcher in Pittsylvania; John Carthrea, Peter Conrad, Leonard Herring, John Perkey, George Huston, Francis Kirtley, John Lincoln, and Reuben Moore in Rockingham.

<sup>77</sup>Owners of less than 500 acres: Parker Barnes, David Bowman, James J. Abbott, John Bull, John Burton, John A. Bundick, Gustis, Peter Delagatious, William Drummond, John Gillet, Isiah Hickman, Will Justice, William Mears, John Milby, William Nock, William Matthews, Thomas Parker, and Selby Simpson in Accomac; William Craven, Jacob Nicholas, David Ralston Jr., and John Rush in Rockingham.

78

"Accomac Wills and Deeds Book, 1787-1797", p. 20.

79

"Pittsylvania Deeds and Wills Book, Number 1", p. 300.

80

Town Property: David Bowman, John Burton, John A. Bundick, Edward Ker, John S. Ker, Charles Stockley, George Scarborough, and Robert Twiford in Accomac; James Devier, Charles McLain, and John Graham in Rockingham.

81

Slave holders: Edward Ker in Accomac; Abraham Shelton, Armistead Shelton, Vincent Shelton, Creed Tanner, and Matthew Tanner in Rockingham.

82

Whitelaw, II, 1315.

83

Maude C. Clement, The History of Pittsylvania County (Lynchburg, Virginia, 1929), p. 194.

84

Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, 1938), p. 214.

## APPENDIX

The men who served as overseers of the poor are listed alphabetically under the name of the county in which they served, and county records referred to are those of that county. The information is not complete and in some cases no record of or reference to some of the overseers of the poor has been found.

### ACCOMAC COUNTY

1. Abbott, James J. Whitelaw.II,1176.
2. Barnes, Parker. Will Book 1777-1780; Whitelaw.II,1122,1137-1139; Court Orders Book 1777-1780,p.29, and May 5,1779.
3. Bowman, David. Whitelaw.II,790,919,1066.
4. Bull, Carter John. Whitelaw.II,991,992,990.
5. Burton, John. Whitelaw.II,1018,1052,1058,1142,1213,1232,1238,1373; Will Book--1777-80,p.20.
6. Sundick, John A. Whitelaw.II,1018,1084,1085; Will Book--1780-1784, p. 477.
7. Custis, John. There are three men of this name and period. It is difficult to distinguish them in the records. Two served simultaneously as vestrymen. All owned property and bought and sold real estate.
8. Custis, Hy (Henry). Whitelaw.II, 1197,810.
9. Delastaticus, Peter. Whitelaw.II,1315,1316.
10. Drummond, William. Will Book--1796-1798, p.243; Court Orders Book--1780-1783,p.157.
11. Fletcher, Thomas. Whitelaw.II,1222,1272,1273,1338; Court Orders Book--1819-1822,p.234.
12. Gillet, James. Whitelaw.II,1344.
13. Gillet, John. Whitelaw.II,1326,1350; Will Book--1788-1794,p.530.
14. Hickman, Isaiah. Whitelaw.II,1123,1133,1147,1186.
15. Henderson, Samuel. Whitelaw.II.1303,1320; Will Book--1796-1798,p.485.
16. Justice, Will. Court Orders Book--1829-1832, p.583; Whitelaw II, 1091, 1186,1062,1063,1189.

17. Ker, Edward. Whitelaw.II,1003,998,922,1004,1023; Wills and Deeds Book—1789-1799,p.20.
18. Ker, John S. Whitelaw.II,915,927,928.
19. Mears, Elisha. Whitelaw.I,601,743; Court Orders Book—1777-1780,p.431; Will Book—1798-1800,p.40.
20. Mears, William. Whitelaw.I,743.
21. Milby, John. Whitelaw,I,738.
22. Matthews, William. Whitelaw.I,518; II,1321.
23. Nock, William. Whitelaw.II,1062,1117,796.
24. Parker, Thomas. Whitelaw.I,698,700; II,793,794,924,966,1408-1413; Court Orders Book—1819-1822,pp.106,165,170,175.
25. Parker, Thomas Jr.
26. Poulson, John. Whitelaw.II,1178,1222,1092,1086,1399; Wills and Deeds Book—1789-1799.p.441. Court Orders Book—1783-1784, p.379.
27. Satchell, Southey. Court Orders Book—1832-1836. July 29,1835; July 25,1836.
28. Searburgh, George. Whitelaw.II,809-812,919,926; Will Book—1794-1796, p.30.
29. Selby, William. Court Order Book—1777-1780,p.17; William and Mary Quarterly, V (1st series) p.252; Whitelaw II,1294,1295,1287, 1315,1300,1306,1345.
30. Simpson, Selby. Whitelaw.II, 1037,1085,1124,1138; Court Orders Book—1777-1780,pp.17,431; Will Book—1798-1800,p.191.
31. Snead, Charles. Court Orders Book—1783-1784. p. 295.
32. Stockley, Charles. Court Orders Book—1809-1811, p.101; Whitelaw.II, 1014,1137,1373,1381.
33. Twiford, Robert. WhitelawII,1017,1018; I,724.
34. West, Charles. Whitelaw.I,340,341,346,355,354,440; II,1091,1130.
35. Willis, Gustis.
36. Wilburn, William.

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

1. Adams, George. Clement, pp. 231, 133, 287; Asbury, II, 206; Calendar of State Papers, Vol. VIII, 278, 279.
2. Anderson, Thomas.
3. Briscoe, John. Clement, pp. 105, 287.
4. Clements, Isaac. Clement, pp. 139, 144; William and Mary Quarterly V (1st series), 247.
5. Dickenson, Griffith. Clement, pp. 131, 140.
6. Coleman, Isaac. Clement, pp. 131, 140.
7. Hankins, Benjamin W.
8. Harrison, Robert. Clement, pp. 211, 231, 287.
9. Hartison, William. Clement, pp. 286, 287, 183, 196, 199; Calendar of State Papers. Vol. VI, 457-459; VII, 196; VIII, 278, 279.
10. Hunt, David. Clement, pp. 194, 237, 236, 286; Calendar of State Papers. Vol. VIII, 278-279; VI, 459.
11. Jenkins, Philip. Clement, pp. 211, 287.
12. Johnson, James. Clement, pp. 198, 286, 287; Calendar of State Papers. Vol. VII, 196; VIII, 278-279.
13. Keesee, Jeremiah. Asbury, I, 423.
14. Lewis, Charles Jr.
15. McDaniel, Clement. Clement, 287; Asbury, II, 206.
16. Nowlin, Bryan W.
17. Nowlin, James.
18. Pain (Payne), Reuben. Clement, pp. 144, 163, 287.
19. Price, William. Asbury II, 579.
20. Shelton, Abraham. Clement, p. 138; Deeds and Will Book Number 11, p. 182; Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XXIII, p. 304.
21. Shelton, Armistead; Clement, pp. 134, 140, 144, 199, 218, 287; Deeds and Wills Book Number 9, p. 524.
22. Shelton, Vincent. Clement, p. 199, 286, 287; Calendar of State Papers, Vol. VII, 196.
23. Smith, John. Clement, pp. 223, 287.

24. Smith, Thomas. Clement, pp.149,231,287.
25. Soyars, James. Clement, p.211.
26. Stamps, John.
27. Stokes, Allen. Clement, pp.129,211.
28. Stone, Joshua. Clement, pp.199,286,287; Calender of State Papers, Vol.VII,196.
29. Swanson, William. Clement, p.198.
30. Tanner, Creed. Deeds and Wills Book Number 9, p.334.
31. Tanner, Matthew, Deeds and Wills Book Number 9, p.334.
32. Thompson, Jennings.
33. Tuggle, Lodowick. Clement, p.287; Referred to as Captain Tuggle in minute book, September 7, 1789.
34. Ware, William. Clement, pp.105,206,231.
35. White, William.
36. Wilkinson, William. Calender of State Papers. Vol.VII,196.
37. Williams, James M. Clement, p.199.
38. Wilson, John. Asbury, I, 373; Clement, pp.140,163,181,188; Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol.V, 218; Calendar of State Papers, Vol.VIII, 278-279; Deeds and Wills Book Number 11, p.300.
39. Witcher, William. Clement, pp.140,143,159; Deeds and Wills Book Number 11, p.314.

#### ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

1. Carthrea, John. Court Order Book Number 3, February 27, 1793. Wayland, Valley Records, p.42.
2. Conrad, Peter. Court Orders Book Number 3, June 27, 1791; Number 6, July 18, 1799 and October 21, 1800; Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol.X, 391; Wayland, Valley Records, p.45.
3. Cook, Henry. Court Orders Book Number 1, March 24, 1783; Number 2, February 24, 1789.

4. Cravens, William. Wayland, History, p.283; Court Minute Book, Number 1 part 1, March 28th, 1780; Number 2, February 27, 1793; Court Orders Book Number 6, April 15, 1800; Number 1, August 26, 1782. Wayland, Valley Records, p.42.
5. Custard, Jacob. Court Orders Book Number 2, June 28, 1786; Number 5, June 22, 1795.
6. Davis, James. Court Minute Book Number 1, part 1, November 27, 1780; March 27, 1781; Court Orders Book Number 4, July 29, 1794; Number 1, August 24, 1779.
7. Devier, James. Wayland, Valley Records, p.90; Court Orders Book Number 1, April 26, 1784; Number 2, April 24, 1787.
8. Dyer, James. Court Orders Book Number 1, April 27, 1778; June 22, 1778.
9. Fawcett, Joseph. Court Orders Book Number 4, January 29, 1793; February 27, 1793; July 28, 1794; Number 5, January 25, 1796; Number 6, September 16, 1800.
10. Graham, John. Court Orders Book Number 5, October 24, 1796; Wayland, Valley Records, p.96.
11. Harrison, Robert. Wayland, History, pp.83, 283; Asbury, II, 16, 128; Court Minute Book Number 1, p.34; Wayland, Valley Records, p.43.
12. Herring, Leonard. Wayland, Valley Records, p.43.
13. Hite, John.
14. Huston, George. Wayland, History, pp.66, 80, 196; Court Orders Book Number 6, July 15, 1800; October 22, 1800; Number 1, March 24, 1783; Wayland, Valley Records, pp.308, 43.
15. Kirtley, Francis. Court Orders Book Number 2, March 29, 1786; Number 3, February 22, 1790; Number 1, March 23, 1779; Wayland, Valley Records, p.75.
16. Lair, Mathias; Court Orders Book Number 2, January 22, 1787; April 27, 1789; Number 7, January 19, 1802; Number 1, April 27, 1778;
17. Lincoln, John. Court Orders Book Number 1, October 25, 1784; Number 3, October 25, 1784; Number 6, June 22, 1799; Wayland, Valley Records, pp. 57, 59, 44.
18. McLain, Charles. Court Minute Book Number 2. September 26, 27, 1781; September 25, 1792; October 25, 1791.
19. McWilliams, Samuel. Court Orders Book Number 4, February 25, 1794; Wayland, History, p.283; Asbury, II, 128.



20. Moore, Reuben. Strickler, p.13. Minute Book Number 1, August 24,1778; Wayland, History,pp.66,84.
21. Nicholas, Jacob. Court Orders Book Number 2, May 24,1786; Number 5 June 27,1796; William and Mary Quarterly (1) XIV,p.13,17,18.
22. Perkey, John. Court Orders Book Number 2, April 24,1786; Number 2, September 24,1787; Number 4, February 25,1793; December 22,1794; Wayland, Valley Records,p.44,47.
23. Quinn, James.
24. Ralston, David, Jr. Court Order Book Number 2, February 27,1793; July 28,1794.
25. Rife, Jacob.
26. Rush, John. Court Orders Book Number 1, May 26,1783; Number 3, April 28,1789; June 27,1791; Wayland, History, p.72; Wayland, Valley Records,p.47.

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